

# **COMMUNITY CARE LICENSING DIVISION**

*"Promoting Healthy, Safe and  
Supportive Community Care"*

## **TECHNICAL SUPPORT PROGRAM**

### **Self-Assessment Guide**

## **GROUP HOME PLACEMENT WORKERS**



**CDSS**

CALIFORNIA  
DEPARTMENT OF  
SOCIAL SERVICES

**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES (CDSS)**  
**COMMUNITY CARE LICENSING DIVISION (CCLD)**  
**TECHNICAL SUPPORT PROGRAM (TSP)**  
**PLACEMENT WORKER GROUP HOME ASSESSMENT GUIDE**

Monitoring the care provided to a child placed in a Group Home is the joint responsibility of the licensing agency and the child's placement worker. The following information was developed by CCLD, with the consultation of the CDSS Children and Family Services Division, in an effort to provide a tool to assist placement workers to evaluate the care of children placed in Group Homes. The information included is based on licensing requirements and recommended best practices. Most of the guidelines reflect licensing Group Home regulations. Sections identified in this guide by an asterisk (\*) are not specifically required by licensing regulations; however, they are important criteria to consider when placing or supervising a child in Group Home care.

The information contained in this document is not intended to be all-inclusive, or to replace assessment tools and procedures already developed by placement agencies. Placement agencies are encouraged to review the information presented in this document for possible inclusion into existing assessment materials. Placement workers may also contact their local licensing district office to obtain a copy of Group Home licensing requirements, review a Group Homes licensing file or file a complaint. For information, a list of all state licensing district offices has been attached.

**CHILDREN'S RECORDS/ASSESSMENT/SERVICES/STAFFING**

- ◆ Is there a treatment/needs and services plan available at the facility, which accurately describes the needs of the child and services to be provided?
- ◆ Are your child's needs and services compatible with the needs and services of other children in the facility?
- ◆ Are the plans routinely updated to accurately address the changing needs of the child?
- ◆ \*What's the child's progress in the facility's program?
- ◆ Are prescription medications administered according to the physician's instructions and is there a written record of the medication administration?
- ◆ Are the services, including court ordered therapy, actually being provided and is there a written record of the service delivery?
- ◆ Given the child's needs, is there an appropriate ratio of staff available to provide the level of supervision and treatment needed by the child?
- ◆ Are the child's medical and dental needs being met, and when was the last time the child was seen by a doctor and dentist?

## **CHILDREN'S RECORDS/ASSESSMENT/SERVICES/STAFFING** (Continued)

- ◆ Is there appropriate back-up staff available for emergency situations and how long does it take back-up staff to respond?
- ◆ Are the direct care staff knowledgeable about the information contained in the child's treatment/needs and services plan?
- ◆ \*Do direct care staff actively engage the children, set appropriate limits, and exhibit good role model behavior.
- ◆ \*What re-enforcement techniques does the facility use to encourage appropriate behavior?
- ◆ \*What are the facility's house rules and discipline procedures, and are they appropriate for the child you have placed in the facility?
- ◆ Are care staff knowledgeable about the facility's house rules and discipline procedures?
- ◆ \*Are house rules posted where children can see them?
- ◆ What initial and ongoing staff development training is being conducted?
- ◆ \*What is the staff turn over rate at the facility and what impact does the turn over rate have on the placement of your child?

## **PHYSICAL PLANT**

- ◆ \*What's your first impression of the physical appearance of the facility? Is the facility well maintained?
- ◆ \*Does the facility fit in with the other homes on the block or does it stand out as a group home in a residential neighborhood?
- ◆ What's the condition of the yards, exterior and interior paint, carpet, linoleum, wallpaper, doors, windows, screens, drapes, etc.?
- ◆ What's the condition of furniture in the facility and is it repaired or replaced when broken? (look for broken draws and missing handles/knobs).
- ◆ Are the furnishings in the child's room gender and age appropriate?
- ◆ Are there hangers in the child's closet to hang clothes?
- ◆ What's the condition of the child's bedding; are the mattress and box springs clean and in good condition?

## **PHYSICAL PLANT** (Continued)

- ◆ Are there extra blankets and linens for changes?
- ◆ Are the children's bathrooms clean and in good repair? Do the toilets flush, and are the showers, bathtubs and sinks operable?
- ◆ Are there adequate toilet supplies to accommodate the needs of all children? (toilet paper, Kleenex, toothpaste, feminine hygiene products, personal grooming supplies)
- ◆ Are there adequate washcloths, hand towels, and bath towels available for all children and are they in good condition? (no holes, towels not used by more than one child).

### **KITCHEN/FOOD SERVICE**

- ◆ Is the kitchen area clean? (look at floors, stove, oven, counters, refrigerator, food storage areas, dishes, pots, and pans).
- ◆ Is the food supply adequate? Are fresh fruits and vegetables available?
- ◆ Does the facility post its menus? Are they followed?
- ◆ Do the meals appear nutritionally well balanced and offer a variety?
- ◆ \*Does the child like the food?

### **ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN**

- ◆ Facilities with a licensed capacity of 13 or more are required by licensing to post a weekly activity schedule.
- ◆ Does the facility follow its activity schedule?
- ◆ Are there games and reading materials available to children?
- ◆ What types of physical activities and/or outings are offered to the children and how often?
- ◆ Is there appropriate activity equipment available for the identified activities?
- ◆ When engaged in activities off the facility's grounds, are the staffing ratios increased to ensure adequate supervision is provided?
- ◆ Whenever possible, activities should build on the children's development of appropriate interpersonal skills with peers and the general public.

### **ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN** (Continued)

- ◆ Television should not be the primary activity for children in any Group Home facility.

### **CHILDREN'S PERSONAL PROPERTY AND CLOTHING**

- ◆ \*It is recommended that the child's placement worker inventory the child's belongings before placing the child in a facility. It's also a good idea to mark or engrave the items to prevent loss. When visiting, look to see if the child has:
  - More than one pair of shoes
  - Adequate underwear and socks
  - Adequate clothing for summer and winter wear, including appropriate clothes for chores, play, school, and community activities
  - His/her belongings and clothes properly stored (hung in closet, folded dresser drawers, or placed in dirty clothes hamper).

### **GENERAL ADVICE**

- ◆ \*Visit the child at the facility where the child resides and not at the facility's administrative office.
- ◆ \*Keep in contact with the licensing analyst responsible for monitoring the facility in which you place children.
- ◆ Make sure the facility sends you all licensing reports, which involve children you have placed.
- ◆ \*Talk to other placement workers about the care their children receive at the facility.
- ◆ \*Give the child an opportunity in private to tell you what it's like to live at the facility.
- ◆ \*Ensure that part of your visit with the child includes an opportunity to speak with staff and assess their knowledge of your child and the child's needs and services.
- ◆ \*When you have complaints or concerns about the care of a child placed in a facility share your concerns with licensing for follow-up.
- ◆ \*Remember that unless a complaint is received, licensing only visits Group Homes annually. Because placement workers are in the homes more frequently visiting children, it is critical that you share your concerns and complaints about specific facilities with licensing for appropriate follow-up.